



General Assembly

January Session, 2005

**Substitute Bill No. 6875**

\* HB06875HS\_APP032905 \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEMPORARY  
FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-688c of the general statutes is repealed and  
2 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

3 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer, in  
4 accordance with sections 17b-688h and 17b-688i, an employment  
5 services program for the purpose of providing employment services to  
6 recipients of benefits under the temporary assistance for needy  
7 families program pursuant to Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Said  
8 program shall include the provision of employment services to  
9 recipients of temporary family assistance that will enable them to  
10 become employed and independent of cash assistance within twenty-  
11 one months of receipt of temporary family assistance.

12 (b) The commissioner shall, to the extent permitted by federal law:  
13 (1) Permit the maximum number of temporary family assistance  
14 recipients to satisfy federally defined work activity requirements  
15 through participation in educational activities that are directed toward  
16 the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent or vocational  
17 education training, and (2) include educational activities as an activity  
18 that counts toward the first twenty hours of participation in federally  
19 defined work activities for temporary family assistance recipients. Not

20 later than July 1, 2006, and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall  
21 report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the council established  
22 pursuant to section 17b-28 on the number of temporary family  
23 assistance recipients who satisfy work activity requirements through  
24 participation in educational activities.

25       [(b)] (c) In no event shall temporary family assistance be granted to  
26 an applicant for such assistance, who is not exempt from participation  
27 in the employment services program, prior to the applicant's  
28 attendance at an initial scheduled employment services assessment  
29 interview and participation in the development of an employment  
30 services plan. The Department of Social Services shall not delay  
31 temporary family assistance to an applicant in cases where the  
32 department schedules the initial employment services assessment  
33 interview more than ten business days after the date on which  
34 application for assistance is made, or in cases where the Labor  
35 Department does not complete an employment services plan for the  
36 benefit of the applicant within ten business days of the date on which  
37 the applicant attends an employment services assessment interview.  
38 The Commissioner of Social Services shall refer any applicant denied  
39 temporary family assistance, who may be in need of emergency  
40 benefits, to other services offered by the Department of Social Services  
41 or community services that may be available to such applicant. The  
42 Department of Social Services shall reduce the benefits awarded to a  
43 family under the temporary family assistance program when a  
44 member of the family who is required to participate in employment  
45 services fails to comply with an employment services requirement  
46 without good cause. The first instance of noncompliance with an  
47 employment services requirement shall result in a twenty-five per cent  
48 reduction of such benefits for three consecutive months. The second  
49 instance of noncompliance with such requirement shall result in a  
50 thirty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive  
51 months. A third or subsequent instance of noncompliance with such  
52 requirement shall result in the termination of such benefits for three  
53 consecutive months. If only one member of a family is eligible for

54 temporary family assistance and such member fails to comply with an  
55 employment services requirement, the department shall terminate all  
56 benefits of such family for three consecutive months. Notwithstanding  
57 the provisions of this subsection, the department shall terminate the  
58 benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance  
59 program if a member of the family who is not exempt from the twenty-  
60 one-month time limit specified in subsection (a) of section 17b-112  
61 fails, without good cause, to: (1) Attend any scheduled assessment  
62 appointment or interview relating to the establishment of an  
63 employment services plan, except that such individual's benefits shall  
64 be reinstated if the individual attends a subsequently scheduled  
65 appointment or interview within thirty days of the date on which the  
66 department has issued notification to the individual that benefits have  
67 been terminated, or (2) comply with an employment services  
68 requirement during a six-month extension of benefits. Any individual  
69 who fails to comply with the provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
70 subsection may submit a new application for such benefits at any time  
71 after termination of benefits.

72     ~~[(c)]~~ (d) The Department of Social Services shall not enter into or  
73 renew any contractual obligations for the employment services  
74 program that extend beyond June 30, 1998. ~~[Within]~~ Not later than  
75 fifteen days after execution of such contractual obligations, the  
76 Department of Social Services shall send to the Labor Department a  
77 copy of such contracts for the information of the Labor Department.

78     ~~[(d)]~~ (e) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement  
79 policies and procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this  
80 section while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures  
81 in regulation form, provided notice is published in the Connecticut  
82 Law Journal within twenty days of implementation of such policies  
83 and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this  
84 section shall be valid until the time final regulations are effective.

85     Sec. 2. Subsections (c) and (d) of section 17b-112 of the general  
86 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof

87 (Effective July 1, 2005):

88 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
89 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
90 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than [two] three  
91 extensions to such family who has made a good faith effort to comply  
92 with the requirements of the program and despite such effort has a  
93 total family income at a level below the payment standard, or has  
94 encountered circumstances preventing employment including, but not  
95 limited to: (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's  
96 children; (2) such family resides in an area of high unemployment, or  
97 ~~[(2)]~~ (3) other circumstances beyond such family's control. For  
98 purposes of this subsection, "area of high unemployment" means that  
99 at the time an application for an extension of benefits is made, the  
100 applicant resides in a labor market area that has a rate of  
101 unemployment that exceeds one hundred ten per cent of the average  
102 rate of unemployment in the state, as determined by the Labor  
103 Department. The commissioner shall disregard ninety dollars of  
104 earned income in determining applicable family income. The  
105 commissioner may grant a subsequent six-month extension if each  
106 adult in the family meets one or more of the following criteria: (A) The  
107 adult is precluded from engaging in employment activities due to  
108 domestic violence or another reason beyond the adult's control; (B) the  
109 adult has two or more substantiated barriers to employment including,  
110 but not limited to, the lack of available child care, substance abuse or  
111 addiction, severe mental or physical health problems, one or more  
112 severe learning disabilities, domestic violence or a child who has a  
113 serious physical or behavioral health problem; (C) the adult is working  
114 thirty-five or more hours per week, is earning at least the minimum  
115 wage and continues to earn less than the family's temporary family  
116 assistance payment standard; or (D) the adult is employed and works  
117 less than thirty-five hours per week due to (i) a documented medical  
118 impairment that limits the adult's hours of employment, provided the  
119 adult works the maximum number of hours that the medical condition  
120 permits, or (ii) the need to care for a disabled member of the adult's

121 household, provided the adult works the maximum number of hours  
122 the adult's caregiving responsibilities permit. Families receiving  
123 temporary family assistance shall be notified by the department of the  
124 right to petition for such extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
125 this section, the commissioner shall not provide benefits under the  
126 state's temporary family assistance program to a family that is subject  
127 to the twenty-one month benefit limit and has received benefits  
128 beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that  
129 family's receiving more than sixty months of time-limited benefits  
130 unless that family experiences domestic violence, as defined in [Section  
131 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193] 42 USC 602(a)(7)(B). For the purpose of  
132 calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A month shall count toward the  
133 limit if the family receives assistance for any day of the month, and (II)  
134 a month in which a family receives temporary assistance for needy  
135 families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction other than  
136 Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

137 (d) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has total  
138 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the  
139 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously  
140 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt  
141 of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who  
142 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of  
143 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal  
144 poverty level; (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant  
145 is born after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall  
146 be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average  
147 incremental difference between the amounts paid per each family size;  
148 and (3) a disqualification penalty shall be established for failure to  
149 cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when  
150 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant  
151 to subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard the  
152 first [fifty] one hundred dollars per month of income attributable to  
153 current child support that a family receives in determining eligibility  
154 and benefit levels for temporary family assistance. Any current child

155 support in excess of [fifty] one hundred dollars per month collected by  
156 the department on behalf of an eligible child shall be considered in  
157 determining eligibility but shall not be considered when calculating  
158 benefits and shall be taken as reimbursement for assistance paid under  
159 this section, except that when the current child support collected  
160 exceeds the family's monthly award of temporary family assistance  
161 benefits plus [fifty] one hundred dollars, the current child support  
162 shall be paid to the family and shall be considered when calculating  
163 benefits.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	17b-688c
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	17b-112(c) and (d)

**HS***Joint Favorable Subst. C/R***APP**